



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

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News Release

FORMER SUMMER CAMP DIRECTOR SENTENCED FOR POSSESING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

AUSTIN, Texas — United States Attorney Johnny Sutton and U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) Special Agent-in-Charge, Alonzo Pena, announced that former director for Camp Champions Youth Camp in Marble Falls, Texas was sentenced Monday to 46 months in federal prison for possessing child pornography.

Paul Edward Cope, 36, pleaded guilty to the charge Nov. 10. During his plea, Cope admitted to purchasing subscriptions to view and download images of minors under the age of 18 engaging in explicit sexual conduct from September 2002 to April 2003.

He turned himself over to authorities after being indicted June 21, 2005 by a federal grand jury in the Western District of Texas on two counts of possessing child pornography. U.S. Magistrate Judge Andrew Austin ordered Cope released after he posted a \$10,000 unsecured bond on the same day he turned himself in to authorities.

Cope's indictment followed a July 2004 search of his business by ICE agents. According to the indictment, a computer forensic analysis of Cope's server and IBM ThinkPad computer by ICE agents revealed more than 1,000 images of one or more minors engaging in sexually explicit conduct and graphic sexual intercourse. In addition, the indictment alleges that the child pornography images had been transported in interstate or foreign commerce.

Cope has not worked for Camp Champions since ICE agents executed the search warrant on his business office last summer. Following execution of the search warrant, Camp Champions reportedly sent out notices to the parents. There's no indication that Cope molested anyone at the camp.

“The result of this case sends a message to child pornographers that exchanging sexually explicit images of defenseless children is crime ICE will not tolerate,” said Alonzo Pena, special agent-in-charge of ICE Office in San Antonio. “Many child pornographers think they can hide their dirty secrets, but now we’re using the Internet to find them and their secrets.”

In addition to his prison term, Cope will be under supervised release for four years after completing his prison term. Assistant U.S. Attorney Doug Gardner, Western District of Texas, prosecuted this case.

This investigation was part of Operation Predator, a nationwide ICE initiative to protect children from sexual predators, including those who travel overseas for sex with minors, Internet child pornographers, criminal alien sex offenders, and child sex traffickers. Since Operation Predator was launched in July 2003, ICE agents have arrested more than 6,900 individuals, including more than 600 in Texas.

ICE encourages the public to report suspected child predators and any suspicious activity through its toll-free hotline at 1-866-DHS-2ICE. This hotline is staffed around the clock by investigators.

Suspected child sexual exploitation or missing children may be reported to the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children, an Operation Predator partner, at 1-800-843-5678 or <http://www.cybertipline.com>.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.